# Unit Two

# *How It Works*

Sacraments are the principle ways that we experience the presence of Christ in His Church.

**2.1 The Nature of Revelation**

Key Concept

In order for humans to encounter God, He must reveal himself to humanity

Key Terms

Revelation Natural Revelation

Explicitly Revealed Truths Special Revelation

Implicitly Revealed Truths Special Revelation

Supernatural Revelation Public Revelation

Personal Revelation General Revelation

Private Revelation Salvation History

Outline

Revelation

1. **Revelation** is God’s communication to humanity about God for our redemption.
2. Kinds of Revelation (0031-0035)
   1. **Natural Revelation** refers to God’s communication to humanity about God via the creation. (0337).
      1. We encounter natural revelation by simply thinking about the natural world.
      2. Natural revelation offers no guidance in how to respond authentically to God.
   2. **Supernatural** **Revelation** refers to God’s communication to humanity about God via the kind of relationships that are unique to humanity.
      1. Human beings possess qualities that make us capable of receiving supernatural revelation. We have “cosmic antennas.”
      2. Cosmic antenna means that we can engage in a loving relationship with God.
      3. Cosmic antennas distinguish us from all other living species of Earth.

Supernatural Revelation

1. Supernatural Revelation is divided into two sub categories. (0036-0038)
2. **General Revelation** refers to God communication to us about God without explicitly knowing Christ.
   1. When revelation is present in other religions that do not recognize Christ, its called general revelation.
   2. Catholicism recognizes that non-Christian religions search for the reality of God and find some truth and goodness because (0842-0844).
      1. All humanity comes from the one Creator (0355).
      2. All human beings tend by nature toward the truth (2467).
      3. God wills that all human being will be saved (0074).
3. **Special Revelation** refers to God communication to us about God through the explicit knowledge of Christ.
   1. Special revelation unfolds in the epic called salvation history.
   2. Salvation History refers both to the events and the narrative of the events through which God offers human beings eternal happiness.
   3. **Explicitly Revealed Truths** refer to those statements made by God. *Thou shall not kill*.
   4. **Implicitly Revealed Truths** refer to statements that one can reasonably infer from explicit statements. *Abortion is wrong*.

Types of Special Revelation

1. **Public Revelation**: The central events, teachings, and rituals through which God communicates Himself to humanity (0066, 0067).
   1. All the revelation needed to attain salvation. We need not put our faith in anything else.
   2. Revelation that ended at the close of the Apostolic Age. There has not been and there will not be new public revelation that surpasses or corrects it.
   3. Revelation contained in Scripture and Tradition and guarded from error by the Church.
   4. What you must believe in order to be Catholic *(Apostles’ Creed)*
      1. **Explicitly Revealed Truths** refer to those statements made by God. *Thou shall not kill*
      2. **Implicitly Revealed Truths** refer to statements that one can reasonably infer from explicit statements. *Abortion is wrong.*
2. **Private Revelation**: Events that support and encourage faith in the public revelation.
   1. The Church must authenticate it.
   2. It can occur at any time in history.
   3. Generally associated with appearances of Mary (Fatima, Lourdes)
   4. Catholics may believe if they wish and find it to be aid to faith in the Public Revelation.
3. **Personal Revelation**: God’scommunication to an individual.
   1. Binding only on the one that receives it
   2. Never contradicts the public revelation.
   3. Authenticated by prayer
   4. Grace and vocations are example



Exercise

Compare and contrast public, private, and personal revelation.

Review

1. What are the two subcategories of Revelation?
2. What are the two subcategories of Supernatural Revelation?
3. What are the three subcategories of Special Revelation?

**2.2 The Problem of Sin**

Key Concept

Our desire for the whole and perfect possession of unlimited life at once doesn’t mean that we can automatically fulfill this desire. When we choose a means toward happiness that alienates us from God, self, others, or nature, we sin.

Key Terms

Original Justice Original Sin

Actual Sin Mortal Sin

Venial Sin Occasion of Sin

Guilt Shame

Repentance Metanoia

Outline

Why We Sin

1. The only way to attain the whole and perfect possession of unlimited life at once is to live in accord with the will of God.
2. God created humanity in a state capable of living in a perfect community of love. This is called Original Justice.
   1. **Original Justice** refers to God’s initial gift to humanity of sanctifying grace.
      1. This means that humanity had a right to enter heaven at death.
      2. This right was forfeited with the sin of Adam.
   2. All human beings enter this life in a state of original sin.
      1. This is not an intrinsic condition meaning that we are incapable of any good.
      2. This is an inherent condition meaning that no good that we are capable of doing will redeem us.

Related Meanings of Sin

1. The term sin has three related meanings.
   1. Sin refers to any act that is contrary to the Eternal Law of God. These acts are sinful in the first sense of the word in that God has given notice to us through his Eternal Law.
   2. Sin also refers to the guilt incurred when one performs a sinful act. This is sin in the second sense of the word.
      1. For an act to be sinful in this sense requires that the person acts with consent—knowledge and freedom.
      2. For an act to be sinful requires that the person acts with deliberate intent.
   3. Sin also refers to the overall state of alienation between an individual and God resulting from sinful acts done with consent and intent. This is sin in the third sense of the word.
2. The results of sin are a deterioration of our own humanity.
   1. We experience this as a loss of self-esteem.
   2. We may compensate by inflating the ego.
3. And a disruption or destruction of our relationships.
   1. Compensation for this loss may lead to seeking false intimacies *porn, non-marital sex*
   2. We loss the sense that others are persons, so we feel justified in using them as objects for our pleasure or prosperity.

Kinds of Sin

1. **Original Sin** is the loss of original Justice due to the failure of the first human beings to accept God’s love and respond to His offer of friendship. (0396-0412)
   1. All human being inherit the Original Sin in that we are born outside of the condition of Original Justice.
   2. This is not a positive inclination to evil (intrinsic sinfulness), but the lack of an ordering of self toward God and the harmony that such an ordering creates,
2. An **Actual Sin** is an act done with consent and deliberate intent that violates the Eternal Law of God. (1849-1864)
   1. A person commits an actual sin (sin in the second sense) each time that person commits an immoral act. *Spike stole a laptop from a locker.*
   2. A person can also commit an actual sin without committing an immoral act by failing to be love God or neighbor. *Mr. Baldtempler failed to make any effort to help his colleague become a better teacher.*
3. The degree of culpability for an actual sin (sin in the second sense) is determined by the following criteria.
   1. The presence or absence of conditions that restrict the individual’s knowledge or freedom. *Impediments*
   2. The presence or absence of malice, oppression or fraud in the act. *Maynard decided to keep Mr. Baldtempler’s pencil after the test,*

Mortal and Venial Sins

1. A **Mortal Sin** is an actual sin that concerns a grave moral matter and is done with full consent and intent.
   1. Grave moral matter means that there is a good or evil distinction in the act and the act has a substantial or serious impact. *Stealing*
   2. Full consent and intent means that the Principal understands the gravity of the act and endorses the act despite knowing that it is evil. *Spike knew that robbing the store was wrong.*
2. A Mortal Sin destroys the love of God in our hearts. God still loves the sinner, but the sinner no longer loves God. *Spike stopped praying or attending Mass.*
   1. Persons in a state of mortal sin have totally alienated themselves from God and his offer of salvation by removing themselves from God’s grace.
   2. In this life, this can lead to atheism and idolatry.
   3. In the next life, this leads to Hell.
3. A **Venial Sin** is an actual sin that does not concern a grave moral matter or is done without full consent and intent.

Occasion of Sin

1. An **Occasion of Sin** refers to any person, place, or thing that we find enticing towards committing an act that is sinful in the first sense of the word.

*Spike was tempted to steal the money from the cash drawer where he works.*

* 1. When we are tempted to sin, we understand a person, place or thing out of the context of the nature that God created for it. *Ichabod snuffs bath salts.*
  2. This becomes sin in the second sense of the word when we act with consent and intent on the temptation. *Ichabod doesn’t care if he is ruining his health.*
  3. Even when the act is not sinful in the second sense of the word, it may cause debilitating effects. *The desire to snuff bath salts has left Ichabod dazed and disoriented.*

1. A near occasion of sin refers to being close to the conditions that cause the temptations. *Spike asked Maynard to visit the strip club with him.*
   1. Near occasions of sin are called “free” when the temptation is easily avoidable. *Maynard declined Spike’s request.*
   2. Near occasions of sin are called “necessary” when the temptation is difficult to avoid or unavoidable.  *Spike had a lap dance at the strip club and just couldn’t keep his hands off the dancer.*
2. We can also be occasions of sins for others.
   1. The correctly formed conscience accurately gauges how avoid this. *Maybelle dresses in a manner appropriate to the occasion.*
   2. The lax conscience fails in virtuous behavior by being careless or negligent. *She wore tight gym shorts and a low-cut top with stiletto heels.*
   3. The scrupulous conscience employs standards that are too rigid for the matter in question. *People living in Victorian England used long table clothes because the curvy table legs of the table were believed to be tempting to men.*
3. We have a serious moral duty to both avoid occasions of sin and to not be occasions of sin for others. Determining if there is an occasion of sin is not based solely on our intentions.
   1. There is a universal dimension as some behaviors are generally to be avoided. *Thou shall not kill.*
   2. There is a cultural dimension as standards vary from one culture to another. *Hijab in Muslim countries*
   3. There is a circumstantial dimension as behaviors appropriate in some situations are not appropriate in other situations. *Offering your recovering alcoholic friend a beer.*

Recognizing Sinfulness

1. Every person will sin. (1865-1869)
   1. The act is sinful in itself regardless of the disposition of the person committing the act because the action by its nature is offensive to God.
   2. When we sin with consent and intent, we are guilty of committing the sin. If we do not have consent or intent, then we do not incur the guilt.
2. **Guilt** refers to a feeling of responsibility and remorse for having committed an offense.
   1. Guilt is analogous to pain in that just as pain warns of a physical injury, guilt warns of a spiritual injury.
   2. Guilt, in the person with a correctly formed conscience, can be a reliable indicator of sinfulness.
      1. The lax conscience does not experience guilt when committing a sin.
      2. The scrupulous conscience experiences guilt when no sin is committed.
3. **Shame** refers to feelings of disgrace or dishonor that cause a person to deny his/her human dignity.
   1. Shame causes us to define ourselves in terms of the sin.
   2. It impedes the conversion process because it attacks the person’s self-esteem.

**Metanoia**

1. **Metanoia** refers to a change in thinking based on a new horizon of understanding grounded in an act of God.
   1. We must experience Metanoia in order to repent.
   2. Repentance is not a requirement arbitrarily imposed by an almighty God.
   3. It is a description of what going back to God is like for a free being capable of love.
2. This change in thinking, Metanoia, frees us to seek **Grace** meaning the life of Christ within us.
   1. Christ offers to give us his grace.
   2. He has chosen to give us His grace through the Church and its Sacraments.
   3. **Repentance** means a change of heart leading to a change in the direction of one’s life.
3. The grace empowers our repentance.
   1. It is a willingness to admit that we are prone to sin and we must surrender our desires and dreams to God.
   2. The grace of Christ perfects our dreams and desires so that we attain the happiness we crave, but cannot find without God.
   3. Repentance helps us to realize that God does not love us because we are good, but He is making us good by loving us.
   4. The process of repentance continues throughout one’s entire life.

Exercise

Select a paragraph or two from the Catholic Catechism dealing with sin. Explain

Review

1. What are the related meanings of the sin?
2. Compare and contrast the kinds of sin.
3. What are an occasion of sin and a near occasion of sin?
4. Compare and contrast guilt and shame.

**2.3 Christ and the Church**

Key Concept

The **Church** is the assembly called out to form a community that provides a physical body for the Mystical Body of Christ—to be a Eucharistic Covenant.

Key Terms

Church Revelation

Magisterium One

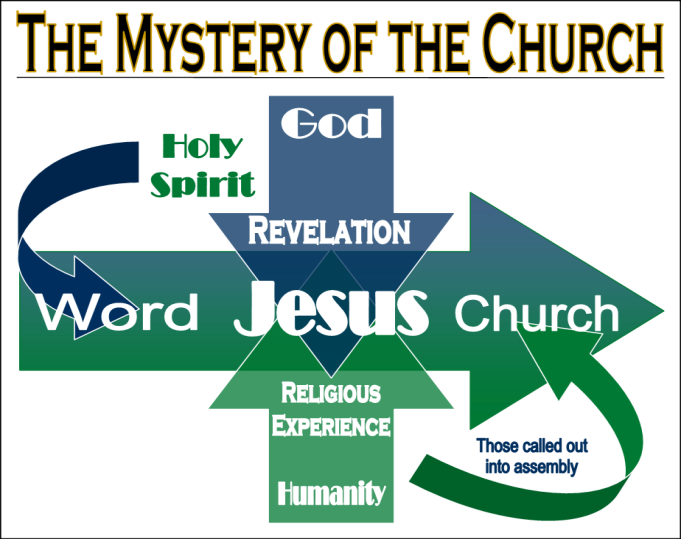
Holy Catholic

Apostolic

Outline

Church

1. The Church holds in its custody the revelation concerning the nature of things, human nature, and good and evil received in and through Jesus Christ.



1. **Revelation** is God’s communication to us about God for our salvation (Happiness).
   1. Christians believe that Jesus is the perfect union of the divine, revelation and the human religious experience.
   2. The Church is called out from the rest of humanity to hold the revelation of Jesus Christ.
   3. The people called out into assembly to live grace-filled lives carry the revelation through history via Scripture and Tradition.
2. Scripture refers to:
   1. The New Testament- the book of the Apostolic Church that sets forth their Cosmology.
   2. And the Old Testament that contains the Hebrew Cosmology- the key source used in interpreting the meaning of the resurrection
   3. Without the Old Covenant, the apostle would have been unable to make sense of the Resurrection.
3. Tradition refers to those ongoing practices of the faith that give us a means to make the mystical journey.
   1. The **Magisterium** refers to the authority of the Church to interpret and apply Divine Revelation in matters of faith and morals.
   2. It protects the faith from error that would lead to an inauthentic Christianity.
   3. Believing that Scripture can be understood in the absence of Church confuses inerrancy with infallibility. Just because the Scripture is without error doesn’t mean that my interpretation of the Scripture is without error.

The Marks of the Church

1. The four Marks of the Church identify the four properties of the Church that indicate that it is the authentic stand-in for Christ.
2. The Church is **One** which means that Jesus instituted a single universal Church lead by St. Peter and his successors. (0813-0822)
   1. Why is the Church one?
      1. Willed by the Father
      2. Founded by the Son
      3. Embodies the Holy Spirit
   2. Why must the Church be one?
      1. Profession of a common creed
      2. Common disciplines of worship
      3. Agreement on matters of faith and morals.
3. The Church is **Holy** means to be dedicated to God; It means to become holy means to seek freedom from sin. (0823-0829)
   1. Why is the Church Holy?
      1. The Church is holy because Christ loves the church as the groom loves his bride.
      2. The church is God’s chosen agent of revelation and grace.
      3. The Holy Spirit is like the soul of the Church
   2. Why must the Church be holy?
      1. So that it can remain authentic.
      2. So that it can fulfill its mission.
4. The Church is **Catholic** means universal. The Church is catholic because it was founded by and stands-in for Christ and because it offers salvation to all people. (0830-0855)
   1. Why is the Church Catholic?
      1. Because Jesus is the universal human Savior.
      2. Because it holds in its custody the entire revelation.
   2. Why must the Church be catholic?
      1. So that no facet of the revelation is lost to the religious experience of future generations.
      2. So that no one is denied access to the authentic revelation.
5. The Church is apostolic meaning *of the apostles.* The church’s claim to authenticity rests in the fact that Christ founded the church on the Apostles who then entrusted the church to their successors the bishops. (0857-0865)
   1. Why is the church **apostolic** meaning of the apostles?
      1. Built on the foundation of the Apostles.
      2. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the church has held and passed on the authentic apostolic faith.
      3. The successors of the Apostles guide the church today.
   2. Why must the Church be apostolic?
      1. So that the foundation of the Apostles is not lost to history.
      2. Faith remains a genuine response to the authentic revelation.
      3. Church can perform its mission

Communion in Christ

1. Limits disquiet the soul and prompt within us feelings of unhappiness such as aggravation, anxiety, boredom, conflict, depression, frustration, futility, ignorance, loneliness, loss, and pain.
   1. We seek acceptance because happiness results from a connection where people experience a sense of communion.
   2. Communion in Christ is the Father’s answer to all that disquiets the soul.
2. The experience of this communion is named by the marks of the Church.
   1. We want to experience a genuine sense of connection called oneness.
   2. We want a sense of transcendence called holiness.
   3. We want a sense of unlimited inclusion called catholic.
   4. We want a sense of divine authenticity called apostolic.
3. This happens most completely and genuinely when done at a fully conscience centered level marked by compassion, affirmation, and abandonment (0030).

Exercise

Chart the Mystical Journey

Review

1. How do Catholics define themselves in terms of the big picture?
2. What are the three key elements in the process of conversion?

**2.4 The Holy Spirit, Grace, and the Theological Virtues**

Key Concept

The public revelation of Christ has come to us from His Apostles. This revelation has been held and protected by the Holy Spirit through the Church for two thousand years.The church’s claim to authenticity rests in the fact that Christ founded the church on the Apostles who then entrusted the church to their successors the bishops. (0857-0865)

Key Terms

Holy Spirit Grace

Sanctifying Grace Habitual Grace

Actual Grace Habit

Virtue

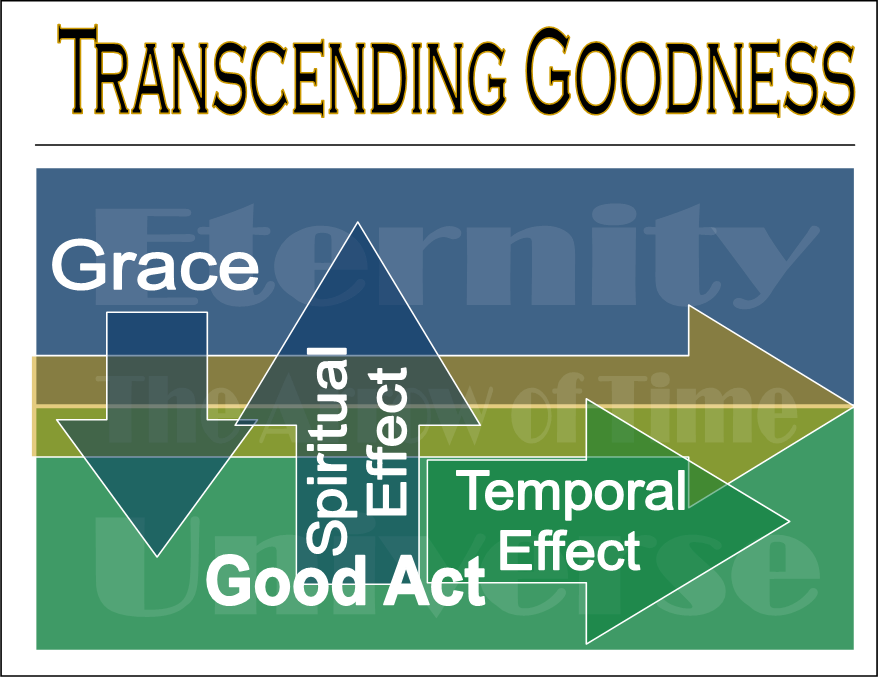
Outline

## The Holy Spirit

1. The **Holy Spirit** is the Third Person of Holy Trinity. He is the Paraclete meaning consoler. He is our Advocate, the one who speaks upon our behalf, when we do the will of God. (2736)
2. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that God reveals Himself (0687-0690).
   1. In the Creation
   2. In the Scripture that He inspired
   3. In the Tradition that He preserves from error.
   4. In the Sacraments of the Church
   5. In prayer where He intercedes for us
   6. In the witness of the saints
3. Salvation is the joint mission of the Son and Spirit.
   1. The Father sends his Word (Son), He also sends His Holy Spirit (Breath).
   2. The Son is the visible image of the Invisible God and it is the Holy Spirit who reveals Him.
4. Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit (1830-1832)
   1. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit dispose us to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit (Actual Grace). The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.
   2. The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms within us as the first fruits of Risen Life. The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity.
5. The Holy Spirit, Grace, and Revelation
   1. The Holy Spirit is the Giver of Grace. (2003)
   2. It is through the Holy Spirit that God reveals Himself in what we call Salvation History.
   3. The presence of the Holy Spirit insures the inerrancy of Kerygma and the infallibility of the Church.

## Grace

1. **Grace** is the divine presence in the human soul that blesses the person.
   1. Grace builds upon, elevates and transforms human nature.
      1. We can be in relationship with God.
      2. Human nature retains its accidents.
   2. Graceanimates the Catholic keys to the mystical journey and offers the solution for sin.
2. To be in a state of grace means that we are in God’s good graces.
   1. Grace infuses within the soul the disposition to be virtuous.
   2. Grace infuses the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the executive faculties of the soul.
      1. These gifts are distinct from the virtues (habits in the simple faculties) in that they are abiding dispositions whereby we are prompted to more readily respond to the Holy Spirit.
      2. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.
3. Aspects of Grace
   1. **Sanctifying Grace** refers to the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within a person that makes the person holy. *Maynard goes to confession and is in a state of sanctifying grace.*
   2. **Habitual Grace** refers to the strengthening of the presences Holy Spirit within a person through prayer and virtuous acts. *Maynard prays and lives virtuously, so he is not tempted to cheat on the test.*
   3. **Actual Grace** refers to grace given prior to an action that enables a person to do a good act or avoid evil act. *Maynard is tempted to not contribute to the food drive, but is prompted by actual grace to do so.*
      1. Actual Grace can be medicinal—healing the person from the effects of sin.
      2. Actual Grace can be elevating—giving an act a supernatural character.
4. Grace gives our good acts a trans-dimensional quality.
   1. Long after the temporal effects of the good have passed, the spiritual effects remain as part of our relationship with God.
   2. Merit is the term for the transcendent effects of Grace.
5. Merit does not mean we are earning salvation (Pelegian Heresy), rather it means that the good we do is praise-worthy because we act in accord with God’s will.



## Habits

1. A **habit** is a well-established tendency in ones behavior that has arisen with consent and is reinforced by repeated experience.
   1. The best way to follow the natural law is to cultivate habits that reinforce our disposition to do what is good and avoid evil.
   2. We create a habit by routinely acting on a value. Creating a habit relocates control of an action from the Executive to the Simple Faculties.
2. Habits make complex behavior possible.
   1. They can give us a sense of security.
   2. They can lead to boredom.

## Virtue

1. A **virtue** is a habit that inclines one to pursue good and avoid evil and so perfects the soul.

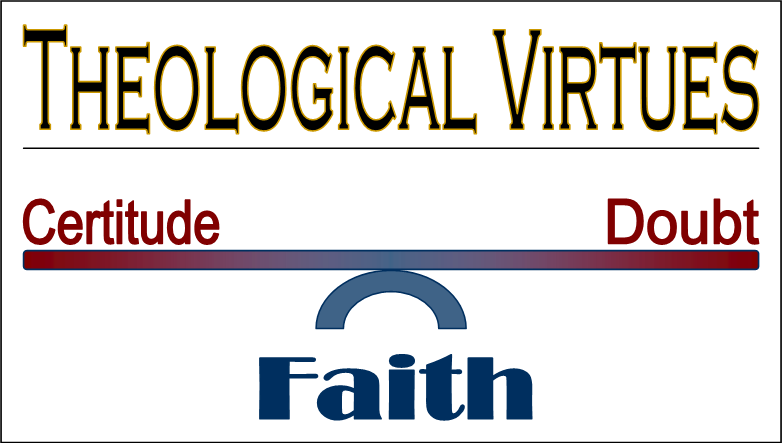


1. Virtues balance actions between extremes as the example of courage illustrates.
   1. Cowardice is the absence of willpower—the need is for Fortitude.
   2. Reckless is the absence of reason—the need for is Prudence.

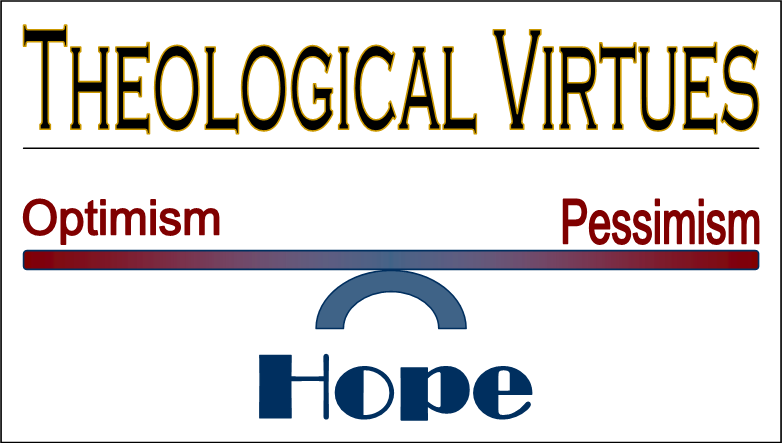


## Theological Virtues

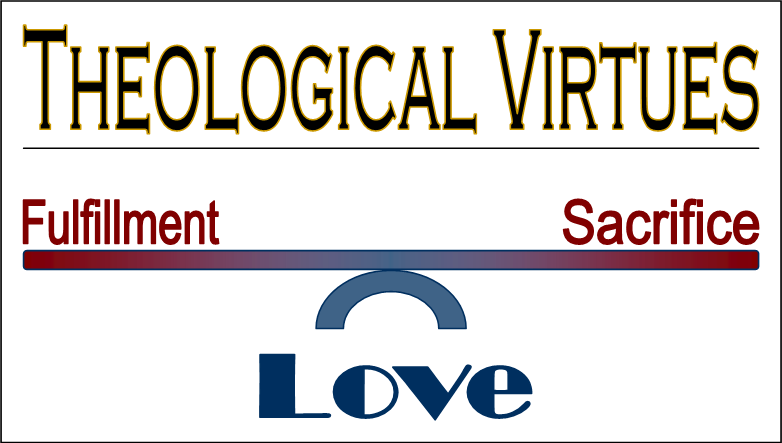
1. Virtues according to their Source
   1. Infused Virtues occur when the habit is a response to Grace.
   2. Natural Virtues occur as the result of human reason.
2. Theological Virtues are contemplation in response to grace. (1814-1829)
   1. Faith refers to the belief in propositions that transcend reason and cannot be proven with direct evidence. Faith balances certitude and doubt.



* 1. Hope refers to a trust in the possibility of salvation. Hope balances optimism with pessimism.



* 1. Charity (Love) is the commitment to the good of the other. It is the commitment to love God because God is God and others because of our love for God. Love balances the desire for fulfillment with the willingness to sacrifice most fully revealed in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

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Exercise

Explain why virtues are found in balance.

Review

1. What is the importance of the Apostolic Age?
2. Is Sacred Scripture the only source of the Apostolic Revelation?

**2.5 The Mystical Journey**

Key Concept

The Mystical Journey describes the internal movement to our better more Christ-like self.

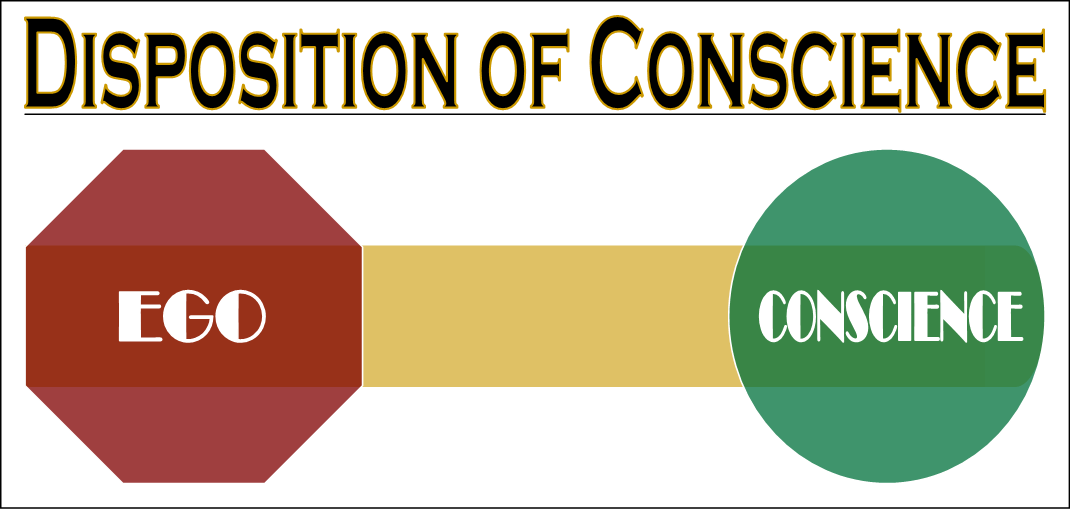
Key Terms

Humility Self-Righteous

Self-Pity

Outline

## Becoming our Better Selves

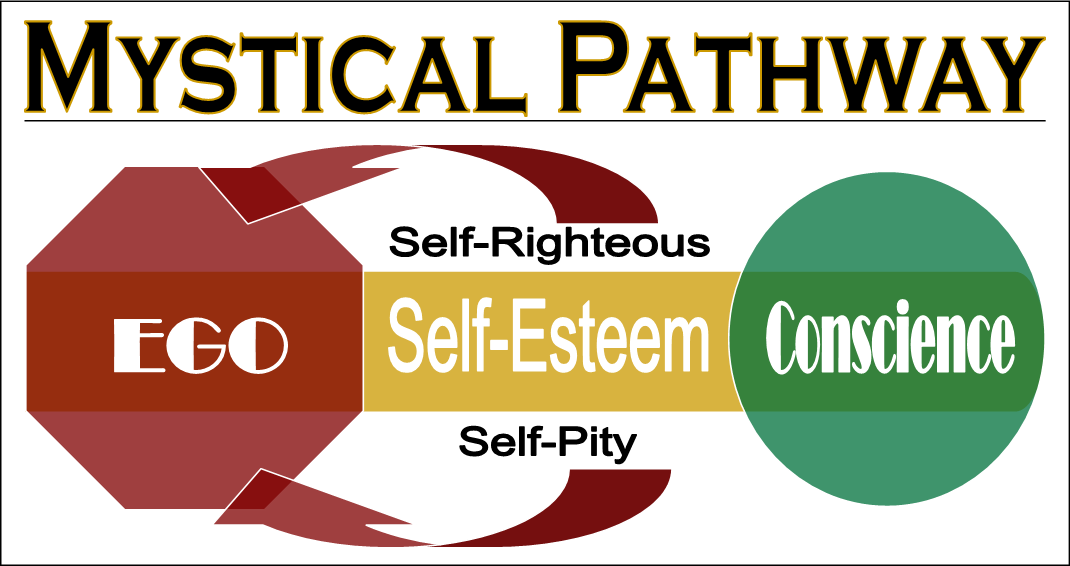


1. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby people recognize the moral quality of an act that they are going to perform, are in the process of performing, or have already completed. (1778)
2. There is a struggle within each of us over whether we will live out of ego or conscience.
3. We are born with a sense of ourselves as separate and distinct beings. This sense is called the Ego.
   1. We need formation so that we will come to live out of conscience rather than ego.
   2. All the great religions and philosophies call their followers to live out of conscience.
   3. In living out of conscience, we will find the acceptance we crave in the name of happiness.
4. Comparing the ego-centered and conscience-centered person.



## Potential for the Mystical Journey

1. We are born with a sense of ourselves as separate and distinct beings. This sense is called the Ego
   1. The reason we are inclined to define the cosmos in terms of our selves is not because we have an ego, but is the consequence of the Original Sin. “*No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad.”—Genesis 3:*5
   2. The desire to be like “gods who know” is the desire to define the cosmos in terms of oneself in the errant belief that it will give us the happiness that we crave.
2. As the story of the Fall of Humanity illustrates, violating God’s Will leads to disaster.
   1. Humanity cannot repair the alienation of sin. The wickedness is in all of us and we need a Savior. *Story of Noah*
      1. Christians believe this Savior is Jesus Christ.
      2. This Savior offers Grace (God’s presence to humanity) Grace is an invitation to repent, convert, and live out of conscience.
   2. When we accept grace, we commit to becoming our better more Christ-like self now and our best most Christ-like self in eternity.
3. Our potential to accept grace and live out of conscience rests in our self-esteem.
   1. When our self-esteem is healthy, we accept ourselves and presume others will accept us. We presume we are worthy of another’s love.
   2. When our self-esteem is damaged we reject ourselves in whole or in part and we presume others also reject us. We presume we are unworthy of love.

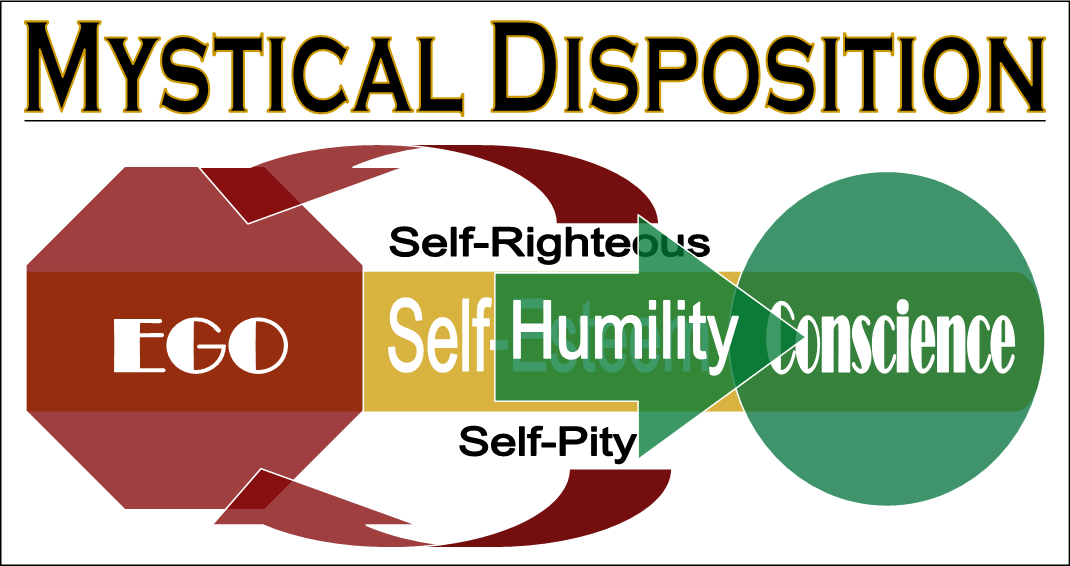


* 1. The mystical journey may help heal one’s self-esteem, but a foundation of self-esteem must be present in the first place in order for the person to have the potential to embark on the mystical journey.

1. The Mystical Journey is a post-payback experience. We get the worst results at first having made great effort, but in time the results improve even as the effort eases.

## Embarking on the Mystical Journey

1. Before embarking on the mystical journey we must make a commitment to seek sanctification. This includes
   1. Initiation into the Mystical Body of Christ through Baptism
   2. Prayer and the reception of the Sacraments beginning with confession.
   3. Avoidance of Sin
   4. Virtuous living
   5. Final perseverance
2. The path of the mystical journey is humility. **Humility** refers to a disposition of modesty in which we accept the truth about ourselves. (1430)
   1. Humility rests on the foundation of self-esteem.
   2. The process begins by forgiving others and seeking their forgiveness.
   3. It requires us to accept others as they are and not as we want them to be.
   4. We must drop the baggage we carry from all of the harm and hurt, real or imagined that we have experienced.
   5. We focus on living in the mystery of the now and in so doing we transcend from the virtual present of the universe to the actual present of eternity.
   6. We must strive to bring the perspective of life in eternity to our life in the universe.



1. We deny the truth and engage in self-deception when we adopt an attitude in opposition to humility.
   1. An attitude of **self-righteousness** is the belief that we are right just because we believe we are right.
   2. An attitude of **self-pity** is the belief that we are not responsible for our freely made choices, but are victims.
2. These attitudes draw us back into the ego.
   1. When living out of ego, we substitute attachments to those things that please us, for love.
   2. When living out of conscience, we understand love as the commitment to the good of another.

## Mystical Journey in Christ (0613-0615)

1. All of the great religions of the world agree that if we are to find happiness we must stop trying to define all things in terms of self and instead define the self in terms of all things.



1. But how can we define ourselves in terms of the cosmos owing to the vastness of the concept?
2. By define ourselves in terms of the Word made flesh—Christ. *John 1:1-1:5*



* 1. We are each the masters of our fate because we are free to accept grace (and define ourselves in terms of Christ) or reject grace.
  2. In accepting grace we embark on the mystical journey.

1. Mystical formation is not an act of submission to an ideology; rather it is personal relationship with Christ.
   1. Personal does not mean exclusively individual because Christ is encountered through the Church.
   2. Personal does mean a relationship of real intimacy that over time creates ones identity in the Communion of the Saints.
2. To make the mystical journey as a Christian is to live in the context of the Paschal Sacrifice of Christ. *The Mass*
   1. The Paschal Sacrifice is the divinely ordained solution for human sin.
   2. The Paschal Sacrifice of Christ is unique; it completes and surpasses all other sacrifices.
      1. It is a gift from the Father who handed over his son to sinners so that He would be reconciled with humanity.
      2. It is the free act of the Son who offers Himself through the Holy Spirit in reparation for the sinful disobedience of humanity.
3. Christ’s Paschal Sacrifice accomplishes the salvation of humanity.
   1. Through the Cross-, Jesus substitutes his obedience for our disobedience.
   2. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
   3. Jesus is the sacrifice of the New Covenant, which restores humanity to communion with God.

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Exercise

Chart the Mystical Journey

Review

1. How do Catholics define themselves in terms of the big picture?
2. What are the three key elements in the process of conversion?

**2.6 Prayer**

Key Concept

The Church is can be no more Catholic then the prayer life of its members will support. Nothing genuinely Catholic happens in the absence of prayer.

Key Terms

Prayer Spiritual Inertia

Outline

## Prayer

1. **Prayer** is the conscious act of seeking to experience the Divine.
   1. It is analogous to a friendship in that we seek with the Divine a genuine, intimate connected relationship.
   2. To pray in the fullest sense of the word is to openly and completely share self with God.
2. As we experience the Divine, we are drawn out of the ego and toward the conscience—where human happiness truly lies.
   1. As Catholics our prayer occurs in the context of sacraments. (2745)
   2. Sacraments are the way that Christ gave us to connect with His Risen Life. Excluding the sacraments from our prayer life, reduces the presence of grace and diminishes the power of prayer.



1. As we pray, Jesus will draw us more fully and freely into the divine, but only to the degree that we are willing to honestly share our self.
   1. We experience being drawn into the divine as an on-going process of dying and rising.
   2. We are on the way to becoming our better more Christ-like self today and our best most Christ-like self in Eternity.



1. As we pray, we act on our capacity to be fully human—compassion, affirmation, and abandonment.
   1. Idolatry gives way to faith
   2. Expectation gives way to hope.
   3. Attachment gives way to love.

## Spiritual Inertia

1. Inertia a property of matter by which it remains at rest or in uniform motion in the same straight line unless acted upon by some external force.
2. **Spiritual Inertia** is a property of the person whereby he or she continues to operate out of the ego unless acted upon by grace.
   1. We need grace in order to break out of our Spiritual Inertia.
   2. The authentic practice of prayer and Sacraments begins by seeking grace.
3. Why don’t we pray and participate in the Sacramental life of the Church?
   1. We don’t believe in God. *Atheism, Practical Atheism*
   2. We don’t believe we have a role to play in Salvation History. *It’s a Wonderful Life*
   3. It looks too difficult to accomplish. *Weight lifting or a new diet*
   4. We are not sure if prayer and the Sacraments will get us to the happiness that we crave. *You don’t know if the map is accurate unless you follow it.*
   5. We believe that if we develop a deeper relationship with God we’ll miss out on life. *Grant me chastity, God, but not yet.*

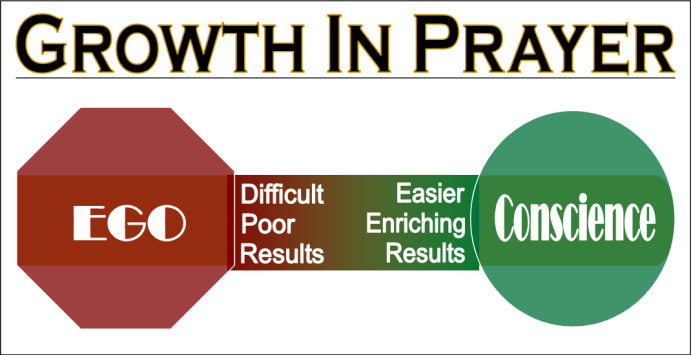
*–St. Augustine*

1. To become a prayerful person requires conversion.
   1. Our executive faculties arrive at a theoretical conclusion: People who pray are happier because of prayer. This leads to the selection point: I should pray.
   2. We must use our executive faculties to school our simple faculties so that my desire to pray becomes habitualized in our simple faculties. This leads to the action point: I will pray.
   3. The action follows: I do pray.

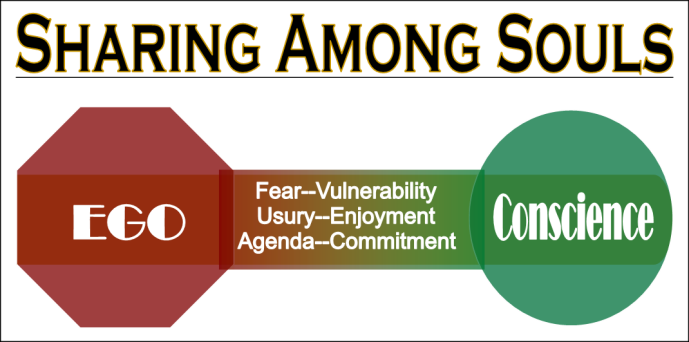


## Understanding the Process of Prayer

1. Authentic prayer is a post-payback experience. The process is difficult at first with poor results, but over time the process becomes easier with enriching results.



1. This process occurs in both how we pray and what types of prayer we employ. The various types of prayer are (2700-2719)
   1. Petition: Request that God grants a grace or favor.
   2. Gratitude: Thanks for a grace or favor.
   3. Contrition: Express sorrow for ones sins.
   4. Praise: To be submissive to will of God.
   5. Adoration: To behold the Holiness of God.
2. At first, prayers of petition and gratitude center on the self seeking happiness on one’s own terms.
   1. When the person finally realizes that happiness on one’s own terms is unsustainable, then a conversion is possible.
   2. We realize this truth when we accept that our inherent sinfulness means that we cannot have the happiness that we crave on our own terms; we need salvation through Christ.
   3. This leads to contrition and opens the person to praise and adoration.
3. What is a sharing of souls like?
   1. It is vulnerability without fear.
   2. It is enjoyment without usury.
   3. It’s commitment without an agenda.



## Quality Prayer

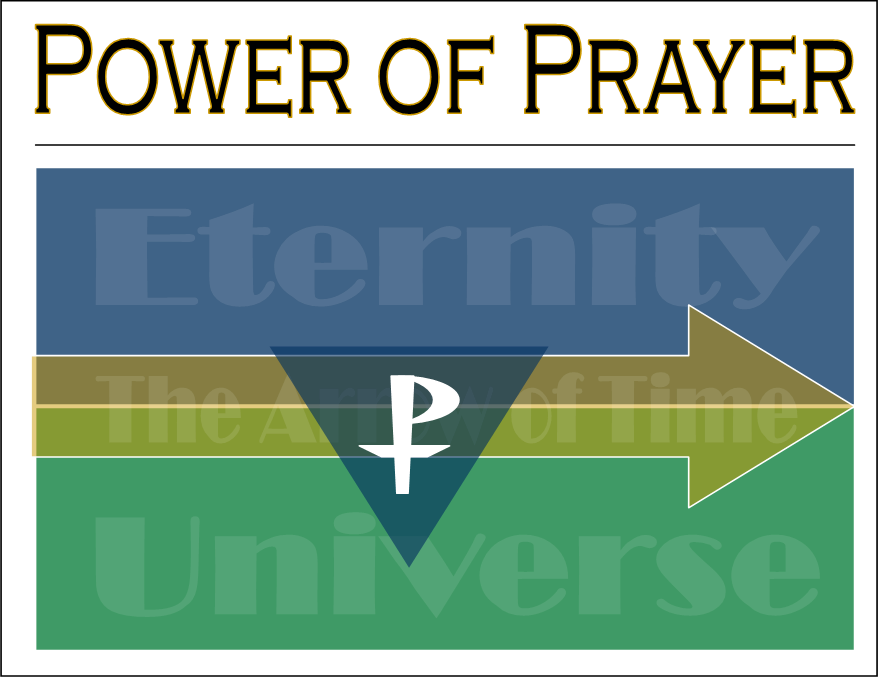
1. Qualities we should seek to develop in prayer (2607-2616)
   1. Relational: Prayer should help us to have and build a relationship with God based on trust—a genuine sharing of self.
   2. Regularity: Prayer has to done regularly. Relationships do not develop without continued contact.
   3. Submissive: Prayer should help us to accept God’s Will and not encourage us to try to impose our will on God.
   4. Honest: Prayer requires a disposition of humility and a real commitment to accepting the truth especially about our own sinfulness.
   5. Integrated: Pray your life; live your prayer. Don’t pretend to be someone you’re not in prayer.
   6. Contemplative: This is the virtue of vigilantly and deeply considering the nature of things, human nature, good and evil in the context of the divine.

## Contemplative Prayer

1. Contemplative prayer is how we connect the virtual present of life in the universe to actual presence of the Eternal Now.
   1. This gives a person a new more panoramic context through which he or she understands self and the events occurring in one’s life. *Taoist Farmer*
   2. This allows one to experience in some measure the happiness to be found in being ones better more Christ-like self now and our best most Christ-like self in Eternity.
2. As our relationship with Jesus deepens, these qualities are no longer just what we do, but they become part of who we are.
3. Contemplative prayer is the experience of compassion, affirmation and abandonment.
   1. We experience compassion when we recognize that the good that everyone seeks is God.
   2. We experience affirmation when we understand our role in helping others to be with God.
   3. We experience abandonment when we will ourselves to set aside the obstacles that keep ourselves and others from God.

## How God Answers Prayer

1. God answers prayer.
   1. The answers do not occur in the moment of prayer, but in the course of one’s life prayerfully lived.
   2. God offers us what we need to know when we need to know it.
      1. We may want to know now because we believe that the knowledge will give us the happiness we seek.
      2. It won’t; the happiness comes from the presence of God.
   3. Ultimately, prayer is about a growing experience and awareness of the reality of God.
      1. This is not just an intellectual ascent, but a realization within our total self.
      2. This gives a proper order and a sacred context to everything.
2. God communicates in constant, pervasive, and indirect ways. *Maynard saw the homeless man in the library.*
   1. Ordinary religious experiences occur when God “cues” us to be our better more Christ-like self in the normal course of events. *Maynard wondered if he could help the homeless.*
      1. We experience this as an insight that suggests a course of action. *Maynard decided to volunteer at the Holy Moses Soup Kitchen.*
      2. Through prayerful reflection, we discern a meaning from the experience. *The homeless man led Maynard to recognize that all of us need others.*
   2. This is largely internal and within the context of the person’s life.
3. God also communicates in occasional, decisive and direct ways.
   1. Extra-ordinary religious experiences occur when God “speaks” to us outside of the context of the normal course of events.
      1. The experience feels like an irresistible prompting to act.
      2. Through prayerful reflection, we discern a meaning from the experience.
   2. The prompting is largely external and not necessarily within the context of the person’s life. Extra-ordinary religious experiences are extremely rare..



## Finding Peace in Prayer

1. To start we need only begin.
   1. We won’t pray well every time we pray—we’ll be distracted or tired or angry or whatever.
   2. Simply pray from whatever the disposition of soul happens to be.
2. We should not be too quick to evaluate our prayer because prayer is about a conversation in the context of a relationship not a performance. *Pharisees*
3. Prayer is ineffective when we attempt to:
   1. Use it as a shield to deflect God’s Will.
   2. Bargain or make a deal with God.
   3. Get our own will accomplished.
4. Finding peace in prayer is not a point, but a process. As the process unfolds, we are gradually converted so that we know to the core of our being:
5. This puts everything else in life into context leading to the peace of a contented and joy-filled soul.

Exercise

How does God answer prayer?

Review

1. As we pray, what happens to us?
2. What are the characteristics of quality prayer?
3. What is contemplative prayer?